

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

March 27, 2000

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 PM, in the J. Martin Giesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with seven members present: Messrs. Bloomfield, Kreider, Raser and Senhauser and Mmes. Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Wallace. Absent were Mr. Dale and Ms. Borys.

MINUTES

The minutes of the March 14, 2000 meeting (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) were approved.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS--3728 SACHEM AVENUE, COLUMBIA-TUSCULUM HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Dan Young summarized the staff report of the proposed reconstruction and expansion of a front yard deck and construction of a new side yard deck at this address. This application had been tabled by the Board at its March 14, 2000 meeting. In response to Board recommendations at that meeting, the owner had reduced the size of the reconstructed deck to that of the original deck, aligned the structural posts supporting the deck with the railing newels above, added latticework panels to screen the underside of the deck, and installed a fascia board on both decks to finish the joist ends and post bases.

Ms. Spraul-Schmidt joined the meeting.

Questions to Mr. Young and the owner, Mr. Joshua Francis, as well as Board discussion, followed. Mr. Raser inquired about the elevations of the proposed project requested by the Board at its previous meeting. Mr. Young explained that these are not ordinarily required and that the applicant's builder was unable to produce them. Mr. Francis did circulate a sketch of the front elevation showing the new front deck. Mr. Bloomfield said he felt the new front deck is so highly visible from the street that it should be well integrated in detail with the Craftsman house. He suggested that the deck be enclosed in a shingled half-wall to match the existing porch enclosure on the other side of the front façade and to continue this horizontal line. Mr. Raser concurred and expressed concern that the new deck not look like one on a contemporary suburban house. Mr. Francis said he is developing a paint color scheme for the entire exterior (including the decks and the lattice beneath them) and a complimentary landscaping plan.

Mr. Kreider joined the meeting.

BOARD ACTION

The Board unanimously approved (motion by Sullebarger, second by Spraul-Schmidt) a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the following conditions:

1. The design of the front deck will incorporate a wall-type rail (similar to the porch rail to the east) and that the railing newels will coincide with the columns below
2. The railings and other non-flooring portions of the decks will be painted or stained to tie-in with the new, unified color scheme planned for the building
3. The underside of the decks will be screened from view with latticework, painted or stained to match the decks and house, and substantial new landscaping, as shown in the landscaping plan presented at the March 27, 2000 meeting of the Historic Conservation Board will be done.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS--140 WEST NINTH STREET, INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNATED BUILDING

Staff Member Caroline Kellam summarized the staff report and circulated photographs of the exterior elevations of the WLWT building. She explained that staff had been working with the (former) project architect for the last two months, but not until now had specific information on the replacement windows been submitted. Ms. Kellam indicated that work on the building has begun and that the second floor casement windows had recently been removed without a building permit and destroyed.

Mr. Kreider asked to be recused from discussion of this item.

Ms. Judy Morey and Mr. Frank Balzano, representatives of the contractor for the project, were present to answer questions from the Board. Ms. Morey indicated that the existing metal windows are severely deteriorated and required replacement. The replacement units will be of extruded aluminum manufactured by Marvin to fit the existing window openings. Though the original metal windows on the street facades were casements, the new windows will be fixed thermopane units with exterior applied mullions to match the pattern and profiles of the existing.

There was general concern among Board members that the Marvin windows would not have the appearance of the ones originally installed in the openings and that the applicant should explore metal replacements. Mr. Balzano indicated that he was concerned about the long lead-time that might be required for a custom metal window. Staff agreed to supply the applicant with a list of manufacturers specializing in metal replacements for historic properties.

A motion by Mr. Raser to require that the existing windows on the street facades be duplicated in metal to match the originals did not receive a second.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to table this request to give the applicant an opportunity to contact manufacturers of appropriate replacement windows.

REMOVAL OF ZONING OVERLAY TO REPEAL THE LOCALLY DESIGNATED LAUREL HOMES HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Dan Young summarized the staff report, outlining the background of the original local historic designation and the request from the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) and the Laurel Homes Resident Council seeking the repeal of the local designation of the Laurel Homes Historic District to permit demolition of the current buildings and redevelopment of the site. Under the Cincinnati Municipal Code, property owners, community groups, the Urban Conservator, the City Manager and others can request a review concerning the repeal of a local historic district.

In reviewing the nomination prepared in 1989, Mr. Young concluded that Laurel Homes is clearly significant not only to the history of Cincinnati, but the region and the nation as well. Laurel Homes still has integrity of design, although one building was demolished and three have been rehabilitated.

The Cincinnati Municipal Code is very specific on other factors that the City Planning Commission, not the Historic Conservation Board, is to consider when establishing a historic district. These are:

1. The relationship of the proposed designation to the comprehensive plans of the City and the community in which the proposed district is located; and
2. The effect of the proposed designation on the surrounding areas and economic development plans of the city; and
3. Such other planning considerations as may be relevant to the designation.

In answer to a question from Ms. Wallace, Mr. Young explained the process for consideration of de-designation of a historic district: The Historic Conservation Board makes its recommendations to City Council and the City Planning Commission. The Planning Commission also makes its recommendations to City Council. To make a decision against the advice of the City Planning Commission, City Council needs a three-quarter majority, not just a simple majority. The Historic Conservation Board was asked to evaluate the historic significance and integrity of the Laurel Homes Historic District, not the economic viability of the housing project or individual buildings. This is an application requesting the repeal of the ordinance creating the local designation of Laurel Homes as a historic district.

The federally mandated Section 106 review that comes before the Historic Conservation Board will address the question of obsolescence and the mitigation of adverse effects on these historic buildings.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to accept the Staff recommendation to:

1. Find that Laurel Homes is significant to the history of Cincinnati, the region and the nation and that Laurel Homes continues to possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials workmanship, feeling and association, as documented in the earlier designation report of March 1989.
2. Recommend that the local designation of the Laurel Homes Historic District not be repealed, unless the City Planning Commission and City Council determine that the continuance of the historic district will impede the implementation of comprehensive plans for the West End community, will adversely affect the surrounding area and the economic development plans of the City, and will not be beneficial to the City, based on other applicable planning considerations.
3. Direct staff to work closely with CMHA, the Cincinnati Department of Neighborhood Services and the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office to complete the federally mandated historic compliance review process for this project, including determination of whether the project will result in an adverse effect to the historic character of the district and the negotiation of appropriate measures to mitigate the loss of this significant historic resource.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned (motion by Bloomfield, second by Spraul-Schmidt).

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

DATE _____